

Chapter 6 School Meals

Module 5: Measuring Success



Step Up and Step Out to measure results

Your coalition will review the school meal component of the community review to help plan school meal actions that provide a place to practice healthy eating and reinforce healthy eating messages. Use information from the community review to:

- ♥ Identify strengths and areas for development in the school meal program
- ♥ Determine a starting point by which to determine success
- ♥ Establish goals
- ♥ Check progress in meeting goals



Measures

To measure success of school meal programs, consider the types of actions that are used to create a consistent healthy eating message. Measure the number of links formed with other components. It will give an indicator of the support, collaboration, and communication network being formed.

Develop and implement school policies that make healthful foods widely available

Example of measures:



1. An increase in the number of healthy foods offered
2. An increase in the number of unfamiliar and culturally diverse low fat foods offered

3. An increase in food service purchases reflecting healthy food consumption, i.e., an increase in fruit and vegetables eaten

Educate parents about the value of school meals

Examples of measures:



An increase in the number of actions taken to send health messages to parents:

- a. Homework assignments
- b. Presentations at PTO meetings
- c. Newsletter articles

Provide resources for nutrition information and services

Examples of measures:



An increase in the number of nutrition information resources obtained referred to and used by others

- a. Food Guide Pyramid Posters
- b. 5-A-Day materials
- c. County Extension information

Keep staff informed about the importance of healthy school meals

Examples of measures:



An increase in the number of times healthy school meal information is communicated to staff

- a. Presentations/in-services
- b. Newsletters
- c. Updates at staff meetings

Involve students in planning to build interest and tasting of healthy foods offered

Examples of measures:



1. Increased student participation through NAC groups or other means
2. An increase in the number of student surveys and changes based on survey recommendations

Have staff role model healthy eating choices

Examples of measures:



1. An increase in the frequency of role modeling
2. An increase in visibility/number of role models through discussion, newsletter articles, and by other means

Other measures

Sometimes measures of success are determined by how many of the “problems” that *prevent* success are eliminated!

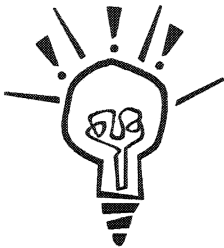


Remember to identify and record current problems to provide a basis for measuring change.

The following factors are indicators of progress when problems are resolved.

1. **Communication:** Are actions communicated to everyone involved in plans? Is there good awareness of the event, program, or action?
2. **Time:** Is there good timing with all that is going on surrounding the action? Is another event or program being held at the same time?
3. **Location:** Is the program or event held in a location convenient to participants?
4. **Resources:** Is the action cost feasible and cost effective? Were there enough supplies, equipment or people available to initiate the action?

5. **Participation:** What factors may have contributed to the success/failure of the action? Were there too many other events/programs occurring at the same time?
6. **Overall:** Should the action be repeated? If it was a success was it successful considering the resources used? If it was a failure, should revisions be made, and then the action be repeated?



Module Tip:

Measure the number of links formed with other components! It will show progress with support, collaboration, and communication!

FAQs:

- **Question:** Everyone looks at student participation in the reimbursable school meal program as the true measure of success. Why track anything else?
Answer: Participation in the program may be the ultimate goal but everyone needs to break goals down into smaller measurable steps to stay motivated. Besides, other goals are desirable such as education and increased opportunities for healthy, well-liked choices!



School Meal Measures Checklist

- ☐ Actions planned for the school meal program on the VMSSOA Plan are reviewed and measures are identified for each action.
- ☐ Develop measures for the actions planned above.

Examples:

Action: *Hold monthly NAC meetings.*

Measure: *Track and record the number of NAC meetings actually held in a year.*

Action: *Increase the number of healthy choices provided in the a la carte line.*

Measure: *Log the type and number of changes made.*

Action: *Students help plan school meal menus.*

Measure: *a. Record the number of menus planned.*

b. Record participation one of the days these menus are served and compare to average daily participation.

- ☐ Identify a person who will be responsible for collecting nutrition education action information.

Person responsible: _____

- ☐ Identify the methods that will be used for measuring/tracking information.
- ☐ Determine a schedule for reporting results to the coalition specified in the coalition's timeline.
- ☐ Include the reporting schedule in the coalition's timeline.

Notes:

**Component: School Meals****Example of how measures are indicated**

Factors	Initial Status	Actions Planned	Results Demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
1. Students are given adequate time to eat meals in a pleasant, safe environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: Work with administrators and school board to increase the time allowed and the number of service times during lunch by 9/05	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measures (steps towards goal): Number of meetings scheduled with administrators and school board. An increase in the number of minutes lunch is served. An increase in the number of meal service times.
2. School meal environment promotes a healthy eating message by using menu choices, bulletin boards, special activities, and music among other things	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: Make cafeteria brighter with paint and bulletin boards by 2/06	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measures: Painting the cafeteria. Adding bulletin boards. The number of times the bulletin board is replaced. The number of times students help design and replace the bulletin boards.
3. School meal rules discourage philosophies such as "The Clean Plate Club," and the use of food as reward or punishment	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date _____	No current action planned	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress
4. Student feedback is used to increase satisfaction and participation, by using Nutrition Advisory Committees, or other methods, including taste testing	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: Expand current NAC activities by having students plan menus based on school meal plan guidelines by 10/05	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measure: The number of menus students plan.
5. The sale of foods high in fat, sodium, and added sugars on school grounds and as part of fundraising activities is discouraged	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/06	Example: Form a task group to work with administrators and fundraising groups to identify other fundraising activities by 3/06	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of a measure: A decrease in the number of high fat/sugar fundraisers.
6. School meals are coordinated with classroom nutrition education to reinforce learning and increase awareness of healthy eating choices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strength <input type="checkbox"/> Develop Date _____		<input type="checkbox"/> In progress

Step Up and Step Out... School Meals

School Meal Factors	Status	Actions Planned	Results demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments
7. Theme days, and special menus are used to increase participation	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: Plan a minimum of 4 theme meals with collaborative effort that link classroom, school meals, and P.E. by 12/05	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measures: The number of people involved on the planning team. The number of theme meals initiated. The number of links formed for each meal
8. School meal choices for reimbursable and a la carte items reflect all federal and state school healthy eating guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: Add lower fat/sugar a la carte choices by 10/05	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measure: The number of lower fat/sugar choices added.
9. School food service markets the program to students, parents, faculty, administration, and community through a variety of methods, including newsletters and parent meal invitations	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: Explore feasibility of having middle school students design and write the newsletter by 9/05	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measure: The number of students involved in writing the newsletter. The number of newsletters created.
10. School staff model personal healthy eating and physical activity choices	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: Determine incentives for food service staff to plan and participate in the staff wellness program by 10/05	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measure: The number of opportunities offered for staff involvement in the wellness program; the number of incentives offered; the number of modeling examples participants provide.
11. Administration supports the above factors	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Date 6/05	Example: The coalition will identify ways to increase administrative support by 9/05	<input type="checkbox"/> In progress Example of measure: The number of times administrative support is demonstrated through recognition, policy, time, money, or visits to the food service department.
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength <input type="checkbox"/> Develop Date		In progress

